

# Sen. Dodd Indicts Press on Viet 'Hoax'

STATINTL

## WASHINGTON

## Chaotic Situation

Charges that the press misled the American public on events in Viet Nam leading up to the fall of the Diem government are made by U. S. Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Connecticut Democrat, in an official Senate document issued this week.

Senator Dodd's accusations — he does not name any newspaper or news service — appear in a letter he had printed as an introduction to the Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission to South Viet Nam.

The report was made public originally last Dec. 9 by the UN. The reprint was done at Senator Dodd's request, under the name of the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, of the Committee on the Judiciary.

## Other Incidents Recalled

Addressing, Senator James O. Eastman, the subcommittee chairman, Senator Dodd wrote:

"I believe that it might be helpful if members of the press were to ask themselves some questions about how important American newspapers could so mislead us in these situations."

In connection with the Viet Nam stories, the Senator mentioned that during World War II, "important American newspapers peddled the story that Mihailovitch was a collaborator and Tito was a great national leader," with the result that Mihailovich was betrayed and a Communist regime seized Yugoslavia.

He also cited how some of "these newspapers" in the post-war period "told us that Chiang was a crook and the Chinese Communists were agrarian reformers; and the result was a confusion of policy that led to the installation of a Communist regime in China."

At a later date, he recited, there were papers which told the American people that Castro was not a Communist but a cross between Robin Hood and Thomas Jefferson, "and the result was a Communist regime in Cuba."

"Now," he continued in his letter under date of Feb. 17, "we have been the victim of still another hoax, in consequence of which the government of Ngo Dinh Diem has been destroyed and a chaotic situation has been created that will make a Communist takeover more difficult to resist."

At the outset, the Senator accused the press of not being diligent in telling the public what was contained in the UN mission's report.

The mission, he noted, could find no evidence to substantiate published reports in the press that Buddhist monks had been thrown from upper stories during the raid on the Xa Loi pagoda.

The Senator also said the report raised some doubts about the authenticity and the spontaneity of the series of suicides by self-immolation.

"I believe," Senator Dodd wrote, "that any objective person would have to conclude from reading it (the UN report) that the accounts of massive persecution of the Buddhist religion were, at the best, vastly exaggerated, at the worst, a sordid propaganda fraud."

## 'Grievously Misinformed'

"What all this adds up to," he continued, "is that the American people have once again been grievously misinformed by some of their newspapers on a foreign situation that vitally concerns them."

"We were told that the Diem government was guilty of such brutal religious persecution that innocent Buddhist monks had been driven to commit suicide in protest. Now it turns out that the persecution was either non-existent or vastly exaggerated, and that the agitation was essentially political."

The UN mission failed to make any conclusions after its investigation.